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A
Dictionary
of
AMERICAN
SOCIAL REFORM

by

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FILLER



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A Dictionary of

AMERICAN SOCIAL REFORM

This is the first dictionary in modern times to provide a synthesis of American experiences with reform. The subject is one of the nation's oldest; in many ways, America has been defined by conditions which tended to induce reform: the frontier, sections, non-conformism, immigration, resistance to authority. The topic in the Twentieth Century has been complicated by two world wars, economic and technological crises and revolutions, and the claims and counter-claims of socialists, communists, New Dealers, neo-conservatives, and others who interpret the American past and present in the light of their attitudes and programs.

Dr. Filler has provided orderly statements about the leaders of American reform and their ideas and experiences, about historical landmarks and events, significant dates, crucial legal showdowns, organizations, and movements. He has given particular attention to the connotation of words significant in reform — words which have experienced change and distortion in the course of centuries and even decades. Thus, "liberal" had meanings in the seventeenth and later centuries very different from those which partisans would recognize today. The same is true for such words as "radical," "reactionary," "Americanism," "progressive," and for "reform" itself. Dr. Filler has also as-

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BILL OF RIGHTS, the first ten Amendments to the Constitution of the United States, ratified in 1791, over two years following adoption of the Constitution. It is not always realized that many partisans of the Constitution were not partisans of the Bill of Rights. They guaranteed freedom of religion, speech, press, "the right of the people peaceably to assemble," to be secure in their persons, not to be compelled to be witnesses against themselves in criminal cases, and others; see the individual Amendments; see also Civil Liberties.

BILLINGS, WARREN K., see Mooney-Billings Case.

BILLION-DOLLAR CONGRESS, THE, name given to the Fifty-First Congress of the United States because its appropriations during the period 1889-1891 totalled more than a billion dollars. The remark by Speaker Thomas B. Reed that "This is a billion-dollar country" is a notorious Republican *non sequitur*.

BIMETALLISM, the policy of having two metals (silver and gold) employed as the standard of value, the two metals bearing a legal relationship to one another. A major political slogan in the late nineteenth century; see Silver Issue, The.

BIOLOGICAL WARFARE, see Chemical Warfare.

BIRCH SOCIETY, a political phenomenon which burst upon popular attention in 1961, when brought to public scrutiny by U.S. Senator Milton R. Young, of North Dakota. The rapidly growing and influential society was founded by Robert H. W. Welch, Jr., a retired candy maker of Massachusetts, who named it for a Baptist missionary killed by communists in China ten days after the close of World War II. The Society engaged in such activities as circulating a petition to impeach Chief Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court Earl Warren, and imputing communist sympathies and aims to a wide variety of American political leaders. It attracted the cooperation of legislators and industrialists, and seemed to be complex enough to include various wings of opinion, as well as a national membership. It was charged with "fascist" motives and policies,

and also with affecting opinion among highly placed persons in the armed services.

BIRNEY, JAMES GILLESPIE (1792-1857), noted "gradualist" abolitionist, he became famous as a "rehabilitated" slaveholder; his effort to persuade other slaveholders to set free their slaves for colonization purposes exposed the inadequate premises of the colonialization (*q.v.*) cause. His effort to begin a Kentucky anti-slavery society, which was frustrated by his neighbors, helped reveal the tenacious nature of slavery, even in the Border States. *The Philanthropist*, which he published in Cincinnati, Ohio, maintained his cause against serious resistance. In 1837, he left the *Philanthropist* to Gamaliel Bailey (*q.v.*) and joined the executive Committee of the American Anti-Slavery Society. In 1840, he was put up for President by an *ad hoc* group of political abolitionists, though he himself was out of the country. In 1844, as Liberty Party candidate, his relatively few votes decided the election against Clay. He was an outstanding anti-slavery lawyer and, until 1847, an influence in anti-slavery circles; however, a severe accident incapacitated him for the most part and he figured little in anti-slavery councils after 1848. His most notable writing was *American Churches the Bulwarks of American Slavery* (1840). In 1852, discouraged with the course of affairs, he grieved abolitionists by urging the Negroes to return to Africa. His son William's *James G. Birney and His Times* (1890) is a valuable defense of "gradual" abolitionism.

BIROBIJAN, autonomous region in Siberia which was set aside by the U.S.S.R. as a national home for the Jews, was taken by admirers of the Soviets to be their contribution to easing the problems of beset Jews (*q.v.*). They were, however, given limited opportunities to maintain or develop their culture, or the means to develop this region: an area of some 14,000 square miles.

BIRTH CONTROL, a reform associated with several causes: Free speech and press (in the right to impart information on the subject), opposition to church strictures and social customs, women's rights, and pro-labor determination to lighten

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sembled slogans, epithets, agitational phrases, slang expressions, and other materials which entered into the body of living movements and helped define their status and intentions in the societies of their times. "The Forgotton Man" meant one thing to William Graham Sumner, who coined the phrase, and another thing to Franklin D. Roosevelt, who revived it for his own purposes.

A Dictionary of American Social Reform, through its system of cross-references, compares the vocabularies of reform in different times and relationships, and displays their differences and similarities.

Definitions and statements have been kept as short and pointed as possible, for ready reference and use. Illuminating examples and relevant bibliography enable the reader to carry on further with his investigations. Enough of the vocabularies of anti-reform, conservatism, radicalism, fascism, communism, and other social phenomena have been added to provide contrasts with reform, and to indicate the gray areas of language where opposites mingle and meet.

Foreign and ancient leaders, movements, and events help round out the place of American social reform in the world context and history.

Dr. Filler's researches have embraced the entire field of American history and civilization. His works include *Crusaders for American Liberalism*, *Randolph Bourne*, and *The Crusade against Slavery, 1830-1860*, as well as numerous edited writings and essays. He is Professor of American Civilization at Antioch College.

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